

**GENERAL RULES FOR THE TRIAL OF CASES
BEFORE JUDGE VALERIE K. COUCH**

1. Please be on time for each court session. Trial engagements take precedence over any other business. If you have matters in other courtrooms, arrange in advance for the handling of such matters by you or have an associate handle them for you.
2. Please stand when you address the court or make objections. (Counsel with physical disabilities are excused from this requirement.)
3. Stand a respectful distance from the jury at all times. Make statements and arguments to the jury from the podium.
4. In your opening statement to the jury, do not argue the case and do not discuss law. Confine yourself to a concise summary of the facts to follow. Unless the case is unusually complex, each party will be limited to 10 minutes.
5. Please stand when you question witnesses. (Counsel with physical disabilities are excused from this requirement.) Do not pace about the courtroom when questioning witnesses, but remain at the podium unless given permission to approach the witness, diagram, bench, or the like.
6. If you intend to question a witness about a group of documents, place them before the witness before you start the examination.
7. Except for children, address witnesses by their surnames, for example, Mr. A, Sergeant B, or Doctor C.
8. Do not greet or introduce yourself to adverse witnesses. Commence your cross-examination without preliminaries.
9. Court time may not be used for marking exhibits. Mark all exhibits in advance of the court session.
10. When you object in the presence of the jury, make your objection short and to the point. Do not argue the objection in the presence of the jury, and do not argue with the ruling of the court in the presence of the jury. Do not make motions in the presence of the jury. Such matters may be raised at the first recess without waiving any rights by such delayed motion.
11. Unless permission is given at the bench for further examination, examination of a witness ends with the first redirect.
12. Never assert your personal opinion as to the credibility of a witness, the culpability of a civil litigant, or the guilt or innocence of the accused, nor as counsel assert personal knowledge of a fact in issue, nor assert a fact not in evidence.

13. When another counsel has the floor, do not distract the court or jury by audibly conversing with your client or co-counsel, ostentatiously passing notes, rummaging through papers, or other conspicuous conduct.
14. Do not react to a statement by another counsel or a witness being examined by another counsel by any gesture or facial expression signifying agreement, disagreement, approval or disapproval. Advise your clients they are subject to this same limitation.
15. Do not bring food or beverage into the courtroom. Water is provided there.
16. Do not leave the courtroom while trial is in progress without obtaining leave of court.
17. It is the obligation of counsel to have their witnesses available to prevent any delay in the presentation of testimony and to avoid running out of witnesses before the end of any trial day. If counsel has a problem in this regard, it should be promptly brought to the court's attention.
18. Where more than one attorney represents a party, only the attorney handling the particular witness may respond to an objection or raise an objection in regard to the testimony.
19. While the court permits exhibits to be passed to the jury, this procedure should be used sparingly and reserved for truly significant exhibits. If possible, when you wish to publish an exhibit to the jury, have a copy for each juror.
20. Always show demonstrative exhibits or enlargements of admitted exhibits to opposing counsel before they are used or published to the jury.
21. If you have reason to anticipate that any question of law or evidence is particularly difficult, give the court as much advance notice as possible.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Valerie K. Couch
United States Magistrate Judge